

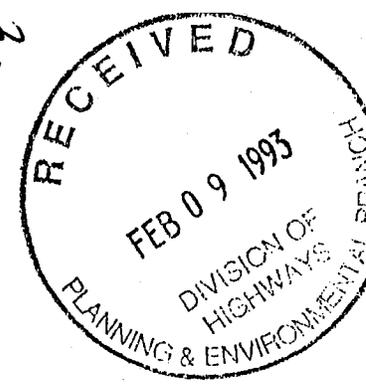


*cc: BJD
Please handle*

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
WILMINGTON DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS

P.O. BOX 1890
WILMINGTON, NORTH CAROLINA 28402-1890

*BWTON
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received
2/17/93*



IN REPLY REFER TO

February 4, 1993

Regulatory Branch

Subject File: CESAW-CO92-M-082

Mr. L. J. Ward, Manager
Planning and Environmental Branch
North Carolina Department
of Transportation
Post Office Box
Raleigh, North Carolina 27611-5201

Dear Mr. Ward:

Reference our letter dated June 2, 1992, and the onsite meeting January 6, 1992, between representatives of your staff, the US Fish & Wildlife Service, the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, and Messrs. David Franklin and Scott McLendon of this office concerning the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT) proposed Pridgen Flats Pocosin Mitigation Bank located at Kerr, Sampson County, North Carolina.

It is our understanding that the following decisions have been made relative to the proposed mitigation site:

- a. The culverts will not be removed from under the old railroad bed. The existing culvert may be capped.
- b. Several drain fields on the east side of the railroad bed may be blocked;
- c. A reduced area will be planted. This will include the previously seeded area east of the railroad bed. Plantings in other areas will be limited to below the 80-foot contour to ensure the presence of hydric soils and hydrology;
- d. To foster seed germination, the area east of the railroad bed will be burned;
- e. Detailed vegetation and topographic surveys of the site will not be undertaken;
- f. Two ground water monitoring wells will be added to the full seedling planting area;

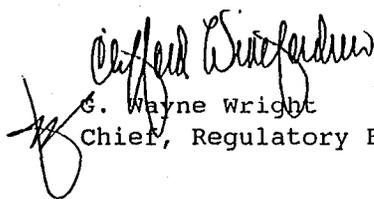
Your "Proposal for Modifications to the Pridgen Flats Memorandum of Understanding" calculates that 127.3 acres of mitigation credit to be placed towards highway projects previously granted conditional Department of the Army (DA) permits can be obtained from this project. Based on the amount of hydric soil area determined to occur on the site, we have determined that a maximum of 87 acres could satisfy Corps mitigation requirements and, thus, could be considered as mitigation credit. The 87 acres was calculated by averaging the percentages in each soil category [e.g. 80-100% hydric soil area = 7.56 acres (90% of 8.4 acres) etc.].

Referencing our previous correspondence concerning our site specific observations and recommendations and the wetland identification criteria set forth in the 1987 Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual, mitigation credit will be acceptable in areas that exhibit permanently reestablished or established wetland vegetation, hydric soils, and hydrology within the Pridgen Flats site. We will need written documentation in support of satisfying these requirements prior to accepting the final mitigation credit acreages. Similar documentation will be mandatory for future DOT mitigation banks established to satisfy DA permit requirements of this nature.

In regard to the above conclusions, we have reviewed the language in the permit conditions of the projects proposed to be debited from Pridgen Flats and have determined that 86.6 acres of pocosin mitigation is subject to Corps approval. Thirty (30) additional acres will be required to satisfy mitigation obligations subject to the US Fish and Wildlife Service and North Carolina Wildlife Resources approvals. Accordingly, with appropriate documentation on vegetation and hydrology, we believe that the Pridgen Flats site can satisfy the six projects that were to be debited from this mitigation.

Thank you for allowing us to review the Pridgen Flats project information. If you have questions or if I can be of further assistance please call me at telephone (919) 251-4630.

Sincerely,


G. Wayne Wright
Chief, Regulatory Branch

Copies Furnished:

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